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Meet Ghislaine: Daddy's Girl

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Absent from mainstream discourse on Ghislaine Maxwell's ongoing trial is any mention of the ties, not only of herself, but her family, to Israeli intelligence. Those ties, forged by Ghislaine's father Robert Maxwell, are critical to understanding Ghislaine's history and her role in Jeffrey Epstein's sexual blackmail and trafficking network.

The trial of Ghislaine Maxwell, the alleged madam of Jeffrey Epstein's sexual blackmail and sex trafficking network, has attracted considerable mainstream and independent media attention, though not as much as one might expect given the level of media attention that surrounded Epstein's 2019 arrest and death or given the public interest in the Epstein/Maxwell scandal and its broader implications.

Unsurprisingly, the broader implications of the Epstein/Maxwell scandal have been largely, if not entirely absent, from mainstream media (and some independent media) coverage of Ghislaine Maxwell's trial as well as absent from the case itself. For example, despite physical evidence of sexual blackmail stored at Epstein's residences [being shown by the prosecution](#) (with the names of those incriminated being notably redacted), the prosecution chose not to mention even the potential role of blackmail in Ghislaine Maxwell's activities and motives as it related to her involvement in sex trafficking activities alongside Jeffrey Epstein. Not only that, but [the names of Ghislaine's close contacts](#) and [even some of her defense witnesses](#), along with considerable information about her role in Epstein's network that is very much in the public interest, is due to be filed under seal and [forever hidden](#) from the public, either due to "deals" made between the prosecution and the defense in this case or due to rulings from the judge overseeing the case.

Going hand in hand with the blackmail angle of this case is the specter of Ghislaine Maxwell's family ties to intelligence agencies, as well as the intelligence ties of [Jeffrey Epstein himself](#). Given that blackmail, particularly sexual blackmail, has been used by intelligence agencies –

particularly in the US and Israel – [since the 1940s and beyond](#), it is deeply troubling that neither the blackmail or intelligence angle has played any role in the prosecution's case or in the mainstream media's coverage of the trial.

To remedy this lack of coverage, *Unlimited Hangout* is publishing a 2-part investigative report entitled "Meet Ghislaine", which is adapted from this author's [upcoming book](#) on the subject. This investigation will detail key aspects of Ghislaine Maxwell's links to intelligence agencies and sexual blackmail activities that are relevant to the case against her and perhaps explain the silence from the prosecution and their interest in sealing potentially incriminating evidence against Ghislaine from public scrutiny. Part 1 of this article will focus on Ghislaine's father, Robert Maxwell, a "larger than life" figure who straddled the worlds of both business and espionage and whose daughters inherited different aspects of his espionage contacts and activities as well as his influence empire following his 1991 death.

The Making of a Maxwell

To understand Ghislaine Maxwell's history, one must start with a hard look at the rise of her father, Robert Maxwell. Born in what is now part of Ukraine, "Robert Maxwell" was the last in a series of names he used, with Abraham Hoch, Jan Ludvick, and Leslie Du Marier among his earlier aliases. The name Robert Maxwell emerged at the behest of one of his superiors in the British military. Maxwell had joined the British military during World War II, having left the village of his birth prior to the war, when the Third Reich began its expansion. Maxwell's parents and his siblings are believed to have died in the Holocaust.



Robert and Betty Maxwell pose at their 1945 wedding; **Source**

Robert Maxwell was involved with the British intelligence service MI6 during the war and, after the war, was [befriended](#) by Count Frederich vanden Huevel, who had worked closely with Allen Dulles during the war. Dulles went on to be the first director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and, during the war, was [busy running interference](#) for prominent Nazis and [actively undermining](#) FDR's "total surrender" policy for senior Nazi leadership.

The chaos of postwar Europe allowed Maxwell to plant the seeds for what would become his future media empire. Thanks to his contacts with Allied Forces in postwar Berlin, he was able to acquire the publishing rights for [prominent European scientific journals](#) and, in 1948, those interests were folded into the British publishing company Butterworth, which had long-standing ties to British intelligence. In the early 1950s, the company was renamed Pergamon Press, and this company became the cornerstone of Maxwell's media empire.

Pergamon's access to prominent academics, scientists, and government not only led to Maxwell acquiring great wealth but also attracted the interest of various intelligence agencies— British, Russian, and Israeli among them—all of which attempted to recruit Maxwell as an asset or as a spy. When MI6 attempted to recruit Maxwell for the service, it concluded, after conducting an extensive background check, that Maxwell was a “Zionist—loyal only to Israel.” His subsequent relationship with MI6 was choppy and largely opportunistic on both sides, with Maxwell later laying some of the blame for his financial troubles on MI6's alleged attempts to “subvert” him.

Maxwell was not officially recruited to work for Israeli intelligence until 1961, but his critical role in securing weapons and airplane parts for the 1948 war that created the state of Israel suggests a strong relationship with prominent politicians and military figures in the nation from its beginning, as this was certainly the case with other prominent businessmen who had helped arm Zionist paramilitaries before and during 1948. In the early 1960s, Maxwell was formally approached by Israeli intelligence to make use of his access to the variety of prominent businessman and world leaders that he had cultivated while growing his media empire.

A few years after being officially recruited as an asset of Israeli intelligence, Maxwell ran for public office, [becoming a member](#) of the British Parliament for the Labour Party in 1964. His bid for re-election failed, which left him out of office by 1970. Around that same time, he also lost control of Pergamon Press, though he reacquired it a few years later.

Having nearly lost everything, Maxwell devoted his time to consolidating control over his ever-growing web of interlocking companies, trusts, and foundations that now encompassed much more than media concerns, while also developing his ties to prominent politicians, businessmen, and their fixers, a group that Maxwell proudly referred to as his “sources.” [Among these early “sources”](#) were soon-to-be UK prime minister Margaret Thatcher; Israel's biggest arms dealer and one of its powerful oligarchs, Saul Eisenberg; financial behemoths such as Edmund Safra; and master manipulators such as Henry Kissinger. Another early “source” was George H. W. Bush, who was then part of the Nixon administration and soon served as CIA director before becoming Reagan's vice president and then US president himself.

Maxwell's sources and influence extended well beyond the West, with many of his most prominent contacts found in Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union. He had cozy relationships with dictators, intelligence officials, and even organized crime lords such as [Semion Mogilevich](#), sometimes referred to as the “boss of the bosses” of the Russian mafia. It was none other than Robert Maxwell who [orchestrated the entry](#) of Mogilevich-connected companies into the United States, a move that was accomplished after Maxwell successfully

lobbied the state of Israel to grant Mogilevich and his associates Israeli passports, thereby allowing them easier access to US financial institutions.

The expansion of Maxwell's prominent contacts paralleled the growth of his media empire. By 1980, he had acquired the British Printing Corporation, which he renamed the Maxwell Communication Corporation. Just a few years later, [he bought](#) the Mirror Group, publisher of the British tabloid the *Daily Mirror*. This was followed by his acquisition of US publishers Prentice Hall and MacMillan and later the *New York Daily News*. Much of the money Maxwell used to acquire the Mirror Group and several of these other companies came from financial backers of Israeli intelligence. Money "borrowed" from Maxwell-owned media outlets such as the Mirror Group and its pension fund was used to finance Mossad activities in Europe and elsewhere; then, the funds were restored before the absence was noticed by company employees not privy to these operations. Maxwell later derailed this well-oiled system by dipping into these same funds to finance his own ostentatious and salacious habits.



Robert Maxwell poses with the first edition of "The European" newspaper he founded in 1990; **Source**

During this period, Maxwell's ties to Israeli intelligence deepened in other ways, particularly during the time when Yitzhak Shamir was prime minister. Shamir, previously [a leader](#) of the [Zionist terrorist group](#) known as Lehi or the Stern Gang, deeply loathed the United States, a sentiment he confided to Maxwell during one of Maxwell's visits to Israel. Shamir [told Maxwell](#) that he blamed the Americans for the Holocaust because of US failure to support the transfer of European Jews to Palestine prior to the war. Shamir's views on the US likely informed Israel's more aggressive espionage targeting the US that emerged during this time and in which Maxwell prominently figured.

Maxwell and the PROMIS Affair

Maxwell's prominent roles in the PROMIS software scandal and the Iran-Contra affair during the 1980s were facilitated by his purchase of numerous Israeli companies, several of which were either fronts or "providers of services" for Israeli intelligence. The most notable of these was Scitex, where Yitzhak Shamir's son Nachum was [a major executive](#) throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, and Degem, a computer company with a large presence in Central and South America as well as Africa.

Even before Maxwell's purchase of Degem, it had been [used by Mossad](#) as a cover for agents, and particularly assassins, who would use its offices as a cover before conducting kidnappings and murders of individuals linked to groups with ties to or sympathies for Israel's enemies, particularly the PLO. Some of the most notable events occurred in Africa, where Mossad assassins used Degem as cover to launch killings of members of the African National Congress. In Latin America, Degem [was also used as cover](#) for the Mossad to infiltrate terrorist and nacroterrorist organizations such as Peru's Sendero Luminoso (known in English as the Shining Path) and Colombia's National Liberation Army or ELN.

After Maxwell's purchase of Degem, it served as the main vehicle through which Israel conducted what was arguably its most brazen and successful espionage operation of the era—the bugging and then mass marketing of the stolen software program known as [PROMIS](#).

Rafi Eitan, the notorious Israeli spymaster who served as Jonathan Pollard's handler and who played a key role in the creation of the [Talpiot program](#), was serving as the head of the (now defunct) Israeli intelligence service known as Lekem when he heard of [a revolutionary new software program](#) being used by the US Department of Justice. The program was known as the Prosecutors Information Management System, better known by its acronym PROMIS.



Rafi Eitan with Israeli politician Ariel Sharon in 1987; **Source**

Eitan had learned of PROMIS from Earl Brian, a longtime associate of Ronald Reagan who had previously worked for the CIA. PROMIS is often considered to be the forerunner of the PRISM software used by US and allied spy agencies today and was developed by former NSA official Bill Hamilton. Hamilton had leased the software to the US Department of Justice through his company, Inslaw Inc., in 1982.

Eitan and Brian [hatched a plan](#) to install a “trapdoor” into the software and then sell PROMIS throughout the world, providing Israel with invaluable intelligence on the operations of its enemies and allies while also netting Eitan and Brian massive profits. According to the testimony of former Israeli intelligence officer Ari Ben-Menashe, Brian [provided](#) a copy of PROMIS to Israeli military intelligence, which contacted an Israeli American programmer living in California. That programmer then planted a trapdoor or back door into the software.

Once the back door was installed, Brian attempted to use his company Hadron Inc. to market the bugged PROMIS software around the world. Having been unsuccessful at trying to buy out Inslaw, Brian turned to his close friend Attorney General Ed Meese, whose Justice Department abruptly refused to make payments to Inslaw that were stipulated by contract, essentially using the software for free. Hamilton and Inslaw claimed that this was theft. Some have speculated that Meese's role in that decision was shaped not only by his friendship with Brian but also by the fact that his wife was [a major investor](#) in Brian's business ventures.

Meese's actions forced Inslaw into bankruptcy, and Inslaw subsequently sued the Justice Department, with the court finding that the Meese-led department "took, converted, [and] stole" the software through "trickery, fraud and deceit." Meanwhile, with Inslaw seemingly out of the way, Brian [sold the bugged software](#) to Jordan's intelligence service, which was a major boon for Israel, and to a handful of private companies. Eitan, nevertheless, was unsatisfied with Brian's progress and quickly turned to the person he thought could most effectively sell PROMIS to governments of interest all over the world—Robert Maxwell.

Salesman and Spy

Through Degem and other fronts, Maxwell marketed PROMIS so successfully that Israeli intelligence soon had access to the innermost workings of innumerable governments, corporations, banks, and intelligence services around the world. Many of Maxwell's biggest successes came in selling PROMIS to dictators in Eastern Europe, Africa, and Latin America. Following the sales, and after Maxwell collected a handsome paycheck, PROMIS, with its unparalleled ability to surveil anything from cash flows to human movement, was used by these governments to commit financial crimes with greater finesse and to hunt down and "disappear" dissidents.

In Latin America, Maxwell sold PROMIS to military dictatorships in Chile and Argentina. It was used to facilitate the mass murder that characterized Operation Condor, as the friends and families of dissidents and so-called subversives were easily identified using PROMIS. PROMIS was so effective for this purpose that, just days after Maxwell [sold the software](#) to Guatemala, this US-backed dictatorship rounded up twenty thousand "subversives" who were never heard from again. Of course, thanks to the back door in PROMIS, Israeli intelligence knew the identities of Guatemala's disappeared before the victims' own families. Both the US and Israel were also intimately involved in the arming and training of many of the Latin American dictatorships that had been sold the bugged PROMIS software. It is worth noting that Israel's government and military-industrial complex was simultaneously involved in selling arms to many of these same governments.

Though Israeli intelligence immediately found obvious uses for the steady stream of sensitive and classified information, their biggest prize was yet to come. Eitan soon tasked Maxwell with selling PROMIS to top secret US government labs in the Los Alamos complex, including Sandia National Laboratories, which was and is at the core of the US nuclear weapons system. In order to plot how he would accomplish such a feat, Maxwell [met](#) with none other than Henry Kissinger, who told him that he needed to enlist the services of Texas senator John Tower, who was then head of the Senate Armed Services Committee. Kissinger has never been charged or

even challenged for his role in facilitating a foreign-espionage operation targeting highly sensitive US national security information.

Maxell, using Mossad-derived money, paid Tower \$200,000 for his services, which included opening doors —not just to the Los Alamos complex but also to the Reagan White House. PROMIS was then sold to the laboratories through a US-based company that Maxwell had purchased in 1981 and transformed into a front for Mossad. That company, called [Information on Demand](#), was headed by Maxwell's daughter Christine Maxwell beginning in 1985 until Robert's death in 1991, during which period she helped sell the bugged PROMIS software to several Fortune 500 companies. Isabel Maxwell, sister to Ghislaine and Christine, [would also work](#) at the company before its closure in 1991.

After the attacks of September 11, 2001, Christine Maxwell teamed up with CIA official Alan Wade to market homeland-security software known as Chiliad to the US national security state, while Isabel would [work closely](#) at the intersection between Israeli intelligence and its private technology sector around that same period. Ghislaine, along with her two intelligence and technology-connected sisters, would hold a significant stake in a technology company that appears to be the actual origin of the Bill Gates-Jeffrey Epstein relationship, as explained in [this Unlimited Hangout investigative report](#) from May.

A few years after its acquisition by the Maxwells, Information on Demand was investigated by the FBI for its intelligence links beginning in 1983. However, that investigation was repeatedly shut down by higher-ups in the Meese-led Department of Justice, which, as previously mentioned, had been complicit in the whole sordid PROMIS affair. The investigation was shut down for good in 1985. The cover-up, oddly enough, continues today, with the FBI still [refusing to release documents](#) pertaining to Robert Maxwell and his role in the PROMIS scandal.

At the time, the halting of the FBI investigation green-lighted Information on Demand's sale of PROMIS to Sandia National Laboratories, which provided Israeli intelligence with direct access to the core of the US nuclear weapons programs and nuclear weapons technology. This was a boon for Israel's still-undeclared trove of nuclear missiles and warheads and helped ensure that Israel would remain the only nuclear power in the Middle East. Israel's acquisition of nuclear weapons, seen in the light of the PROMIS scandal and the Pollard spy affair, shows that it was largely accomplished through trickery, deception and espionage rather than Israeli technical or scientific prowess.

This same year, 1985, is also when the CIA finally caught up with their Israeli equivalent and created its own back door into PROMIS, which it sold mostly to allied intelligence services in the UK, Australia, New Zealand, and elsewhere. It wasn't nearly as successful as Maxwell, who [sold an estimated \\$500 million](#) in bugged PROMIS programs for Israel. The CIA, on the other hand, [only sold](#) around \$90 million.

Heiress to an Espionage Empire

After Maxwell's wild success in selling PROMIS on behalf of Israeli intelligence, he was recruited for another Israeli intelligence-driven operation—the Iran-Contra deal. It was through his Iran-Contra dealings that Robert Maxwell reportedly met Jeffery Epstein, whom he brought into the fold of Israeli intelligence that same year [with the personal approval](#) of the “higher ups” of Israeli military intelligence. The head of Israeli military intelligence at this time was Ehud Barak, who later come under fire for [his well-documented and close ties to Epstein](#). The year 1985 was also the year when, conveniently enough, Epstein met Ohio billionaire Leslie Wexner and became intimately involved with his finances and affairs after Wexner's previous fixer, Arthur Shapiro, was [shot in the face](#) in broad daylight before he was set to testify to the IRS on matters related to Wexner's finances. Wexner would go on to [co-found the Mega Group](#) in 1991, several prominent members of which have close ties to Israeli political and intelligence figures and/or US-based organized crime networks like the National Crime Syndicate.

Epstein's entry into this world was facilitated through his romantic ties to Ghislaine Maxwell, which had [allegedly preceded](#) Robert Maxwell's successful efforts to bring him into the fold of Israeli military intelligence. Epstein was only one of several boyfriends Ghislaine is said to have had in the 1980s, but Epstein was certainly the most similar in terms of both behavior and “talents” to her father.



Ghislaine Maxwell and her mother Betty pose next to a framed picture of Robert Maxwell in Jerusalem, November 1991; **Source**

Ghislaine's other boyfriends during and prior to this period certainly deserve mention. One of the more interesting was an Italian aristocrat named [Count Gianfranco Cicogna](#), whose grandfather was Mussolini's finance minister and the last doge of Venice. Cicogna also had ties to both covert and overt power structures in Italy, particularly to the Vatican, the CIA's presence in Italy, and to the Italian side of the National Crime Syndicate. The other half of that syndicate, of course, was the Jewish American mob with its ties to [the Mega Group](#), itself deeply connected to the Epstein scandal and whose members were frequent business partners of Robert Maxwell. It's worth noting that Gianfranco Cicogna met [a grisly end](#) in 2012 when

the plane he was flying exploded in a giant fireball during an air show, a morbid spectacle that can surprisingly still be viewed on YouTube.

Ghislaine and Robert Maxwell also had odd ties to the Harvey Proctor scandal in the United Kingdom, whereby a tabloid of Robert Maxwell's—with Maxwell's full approval—ran a story claiming that efforts were being made to blackmail Robert Maxwell with information regarding Ghislaine's alleged relationship with the future Duke of Rutland. Maxwell clearly wanted the information linking Ghislaine to the duke put out into the public sphere, but the story is odd for a few reasons. The motive of the blackmailer was ostensibly to prevent Maxwell-owned papers from covering the Harvey Proctor scandal. But the son of the duke who was allegedly involved with Ghislaine was also a close friend and later the employer of Harvey Proctor.

The appearance of Harvey Proctor, a Conservative member of Parliament, in this tabloid spectacle is interesting for a few reasons. In 1987, Proctor [pleaded guilty](#) to sexual indecency with two young men who were sixteen and nineteen at the time, and several witnesses interviewed in that investigation described him as having a sexual interest in “young boys.” Later, a controversial court case saw Proctor accused of having been involved with well-connected British pedophile and procurer of children Jimmy Savile; he was alleged to have been part a child sex abuse ring that was said to include former UK prime minister Ted Heath. Savile's close relationship with Prince Charles of the British Royal family is well known and, as will be mentioned shortly, Ghislaine is alleged to have been cozy with the Royals before Prince Andrew's frequent public appearances with Ghislaine and Epstein, beginning around the year 2000.

Of course, the Maxwell-owned papers, in covering the alleged efforts to blackmail Robert Maxwell, did not mention the “young boys” angle at all, instead [focusing on claims](#) that distracted from the then-credible accusations of pedophilia by claiming that Proctor was merely into “spanking” and was “whacky”, among other things. It is hard to know exactly what was going on in this particular incident, but the whole bizarre affair paints an interesting picture of Ghislaine's social circle at the time.

In this same 1985 period, Ghislaine also became involved with “philanthropy” tied to her father's business empire by hosting a “[Disney day out for kids](#)” and [benefit dinner](#) on behalf of the Mirror Group for the Save the Children NGO. Part of the event took place at the home of the Marquess and Lady of Bath, a gala that was attended by members of the British Royal family. It's worth noting that the Marquess of Bath at the time was an odd person, [having accumulated](#) the largest collection of paintings made by Adolf Hitler and having said that Hitler had done “great things for his country.” The [same evening](#) that the Ghislaine-hosted bash concluded, the Marquess of Bath's son was found hanging from a bedspread tied to an oak beam at the Bath Arms in what was labeled a suicide.

The attendance of Royals at this Ghislaine-hosted gala was not some lucky break for Ghislaine or her “philanthropic” efforts, as Ghislaine had already been close to the royals for years, with subsequent employees and victims of Ghislaine [having personally seen](#) pictures of her “growing up” with the royals, a relationship allegedly facilitated by the Maxwell family's ties to the Rothschild banking family. Ghislaine was heard on more than one occasion as [describing](#)

the wealthy and influential Rothschilds as her family's "greatest protectors," and they were also among Robert Maxwell's most important bankers, who helped him finance the construction of his vast media empire and web of companies and untraceable trusts.

It was also during this period that Ghislaine learned some unusual skills, including how to pilot airplanes, helicopters, and submarines, and became fluent in several languages.

Then, abruptly in 1991, Ghislaine and her entire remaining family saw their fortunes shift dramatically—at least in public—with the death of Robert Maxwell, a death that most of the Maxwell family and most of his biographers regard as a murder, an act allegedly performed by the very intelligence agency that employed him.

According to journalist John Jackson, who was present when Ghislaine and her mother Betty boarded her father's yacht shortly after his death, it was Ghislaine who "coolly walked into her late father's office and shredded all incriminating documents on board." Ghislaine denies the incident, though Jackson has never retracted the claim, which [was reported](#) in a 2007 article published in the *Daily Mail*. If Jackson is to be believed, it was Ghislaine – out of all of Robert Maxwell's children – who was most intimately aware of the incriminating secrets of her father's financial empire and espionage activities.

As Part 2 of this series will show, the evidence points to this being the case, particularly with Ghislaine's entry into New York's elite social circles having been planned by her father before his 1991 death. Of course, those social connections in New York, as well as those in Europe and elsewhere, would prove instrumental in the operation and protection of Jeffrey Epstein's sexual trafficking and blackmail network. Ghislaine's slippery behavior in the years that followed, including activities both related and unrelated to the sex trafficking of minors, show that Ghislaine inherited much more than her personality from her father as she, along with several of her siblings, played a key role in keeping alive various aspects of her father's legacy, including his espionage activities.

Author's Note: This 2 part article is an abridged version of content found in Whitney Webb's upcoming book on the Epstein-Maxwell scandal "[One Nation Under Blackmail](#)." The 2nd part of this article, a detailed investigation of Ghislaine Maxwell's activities throughout the 1990s and beyond, may be delayed in release, along with the book itself due to Whitney being on maternity leave and the complications that situation presents to the research, writing and publication of investigative works. To be notified of the release of Part 2 of this article and/or the release date of [One Nation Under Blackmail](#), please sign up for the [Unlimited Hangout mailing list](#).

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